

SPECIAL  
INTERVIEW  
EDITION

# The Hongkong Telegraph

ESTABLISHED 1841  
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SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1916

December 31, 1915.

Temperature 6 a.m. 64 1 p.m. 68  
Humidity 79 60

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1916

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## TO-DAY'S LATEST WAR TELEGRAMS.

### P. AND O. S.S. PERSIA TORPEDOED.

### MOST OF PASSENGERS AND CREW LOST.

Three Americans on Board.

### KAISER'S SICKNESS LEADS TO STRANGE RUMOURS.

[Reuter's Service to The "Telegraph."]

### S.S. PERSIA TORPEDOED.

### Most of the Passengers and Crew Lost.

### THREE AMERICANS ON BOARD.

January 1, 11.55 a.m.  
It is reported in Lloyd's that the P. and O. s.s. Persia was sunk on December 30. Most of the passengers and crew were lost. The vessel was bound from London to Bombay.

January 1, 11.55 a.m.  
The Persia was last reported at Malta on December 28. The shock to the public recalls that evoked by the sinking of the Lusitania, especially after the immunity which these passenger steamers have hitherto enjoyed. No details are given, but some Americans are believed to have been on board.

January 1, 1.35 p.m.  
The Persia was of 7,974 tons register with a speed of eighteen knots, and she had all up-to-date improvements. The P. and O. office states that the last direct information concerning the ship was dated December 28. She carried a large number of passengers and a considerable crew but at present the official figures are not available.

January 1, 2.30 p.m.  
The passenger list of the Persia contains a total of 231 booked from London, of whom 87 were women and 25 children.

January 1, 2.35 p.m.  
It is officially stated that the Persia was sunk off Crete. The steamer conveying survivors from the four boats, which alone got away, is expected at Alexandria to-day.

January 1, 2.30 p.m.  
There were three Americans aboard the Persia.

January 1, 4.30 p.m.  
It is officially stated that the Persia was torpedoed.

January 1, 4.45 p.m.  
The crew of the Persia numbered between two hundred and three hundred, mostly Lascars; thus, even if four boats each had a full complement of sixty, the death roll must be in the region of two hundred.

### HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE TO FRANCE

### TIES THAT BIND THE TWO COUNTRIES STRENGTHENED.

December 31, 9.25 p.m.  
His Majesty the King, on the occasion of the New Year, telegraphed to President Poincaré his warmest wishes for his welfare. His Majesty says: "The heroism and sacrifices of our gallant soldiers and sailors have rendered indispensable the ties binding the two countries. The king expresses deep admiration for the splendid qualities of the land and sea forces of France, which, he is sure, will guarantee ultimate victory."

### THE REVENUE

January 1, 1.40 a.m.  
The Revenue for the quarter amounts to £64,300,581, compared with £64,300,581 for the corresponding quarter of 1914.

## TO-DAY'S LATEST WAR ELEGAMS.

### A FRENCH COMMUNIQUE

### NEWS FROM ALL FRONTS.

January 1, 1.20 a.m.  
A Paris communique states that the batteries successfully bombarded the enemy's first and second line trenches in Belgium. We also wrecked a German transport of supplies. The Germans in the Vosges, after artillery preparation, launched an infantry attack at Hirsstein which was completely repulsed. The German aviators over Salonica dropped bombs on Greek troops.

The Allied artillery at the Dardanelles effectively bombarded Turkish batteries on the Asiatic coast destroying several guns and exploding a munition depot.

### NEW YEAR HONOURS

January 23, 10 p.m.  
The Honorary Cross of The Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George (1815) has been conferred upon His Highness the Sultan of Johore.

The following have been appointed Companions of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George (1815): Mr. Thomas Harold Lyle, Consul General of Bank, Mr. Arthur Hyde Lay, Consul General, Seoul, and Mr. Barnard Senior, Treasurer, Ceylon.

Knighthoods have been conferred upon Mr. John Alexander Strachey Backnill, K.C., Chief Justice Federal Malay States, formerly Attorney General, Hongkong, and Mr. S. Bourne, Judge at Weihaiwei, formerly of Shanghai.

### THE ANCONA NOTE

### AUSTRIA'S REPLY.

December 31, 1.45 a.m.  
The Austrian reply to the American Note is a remarkable climb-down, and positively concurs with the principle that private vessels, if they do not try to escape or resist, should be destroyed until the passengers and crew are placed in safety. The Austrians are anxious that relations with America should be more cordial. The submarine believed that the Ancona was a transport, and the reply says that the commander was most careful that passengers could save themselves before it was sunk. The Austrians state that all could have been saved if the ship had not not been deserted by the crew, and further declare that Austria cannot be responsible for the capsizing of boats before the torpedo was fired. Nevertheless Austria was desirous to show friendly feelings to America, and is prepared to even indemnify cases of loss which cannot be proved against the submarine.

### BRYAN'S PEACE TREATY.

### REPRESENTATIVE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED.

December 31, 5.55 p.m.  
Reuter's Washington correspondent states that the personnel of the International Commission representing Britain and the United States, under the peace treaty negotiated by Mr. Bryan, includes the American jurist, Mr. George Gray, Eli Bryce, the Arctic Explorer Dr. Nansen to be umpire. If British opinions are involved in the controversy, the respective High Commissioners will represent them.

### CANADIAN FINANCE

### EXCEEDINGLY FAVOURABLE OUTLOOK.

December 31, 1.55 p.m.  
According to Reuter's Ottawa correspondent, Mr. White, the Minister of Finance, in his statement, says the outlook for the reduction in the expenditure, due to the policy of retrenchment, with works under contract at the outbreak of war, a largely increased customs revenue, the Canadian financial position is most favourable. These measures, together with the recent loan, provide war expenditure until June.

### THE SERBIAN TREASURY

### REMOVED TO PARIS.

December 31, 2.20 p.m.  
Reuter's correspondent at Toulon states that a cruiser has arrived bearing the contents of the Serbian treasury (which is being taken to Paris) together with members of the Serbian Legation lately in Serbia.

### ROD'S "ARK"

### GONE TO COPENHAGEN

December 31, 2.20 p.m.  
The Rod's expedition has set out for Copenhagen from Stockholm.

## TO-DAY'S LATEST WAR TELEGRAMS.

### PERSIAN AFFAIRS.

### BIG FIND OF AMMUNITION.

December 31, 2.20 p.m.  
Reuter's correspondent at Teheran states that the Russians found 1,634,000 rifle cartridges and 3,000 rounds of gun ammunition at Kum. Colonel Edwall, the Swedish Chief Instructor of the gendarmerie and two rebel instructors have been dismissed, while another has resigned.

### THE QUESTION OF COMPULSION.

### TWO HOUR'S MEETING OF THE CABINET.

December 31, 3.15 p.m.  
There was a meeting of the Cabinet, which lasted for over two hours, Mr. Asquith presiding. There was a full attendance. It is generally supposed that the whole of the compulsion question was discussed. No statement is expected till Parliament re-assembles. Probably Mr. Henderson will convey the Cabinet's decisions at the forthcoming great Labour Congress.

### ANOTHER MEETING.

December 31, 5.55 p.m.  
There was another meeting of the full Cabinet later in the afternoon.

### CABINET ADJOURNS.

December 31, 7.55 p.m.  
The Cabinet meeting was again prolonged and has been adjourned till Monday. It is understood that the consideration of the draft of the National Service Bill was not completed. The full attendance at both meetings is regarded as showing that there have been no resignations hitherto.

### NO FEARS OF A CRISIS.

December 31, 11.20 p.m.  
It is authoritatively stated that, as a result of to-day's Cabinet meeting, there are no longer any fears of a crisis, involving resignations. A basis of unanimity was reached and there was complete acceptance of the principle that the "Asquith pledge" must be observed. When the Bill is submitted to Parliament it will be unanimously supported by those members of the Government whose conversion has hitherto been doubtful. The only doubtful Minister is Mr. Henderson, whose position is dependent on the attitude of the Labour Conference.

### MR. HENDERSON'S ADVICE.

December 31, 1.55 p.m.  
It is reported that, at the Labour Conference last night, Mr. Henderson advised the general acceptance of the Government scheme.

### PROMOTIONS.

December 31, 5.45 p.m.  
The following have been gazetted: Lieut. Generals—Major General William Pakeney, C.B., and Major General Aylmer.

### AUSTRALIA AND THE WAR

### REMARKABLE SHIPPING ARRANGEMENT.

January 1, 11.10 a.m.  
Reuter's correspondent at Melbourne says that the Advisory Council on freight is preparing a scheme which will embrace all overseas shipping to and from Australia as though it were controlled by a single company.

### THE ILL-FATED NATAL

### 14 OFFICERS AND 373 MEN SAVED.

January 1, 12.35 a.m.  
The survivors of H.M.S. Natal are fourteen officers and 373 men. The chief officers saved are: Lieut. Commander T. and Lieut. Fildes, Engineer-Commander Gresham, Captain Hanson of the Marines, Fleet Surgeon Tuck, sub-Lieut. Price and Chaplain Driscoll.

### TWENTY-FIVE OFFICERS PERISH

January 1, 2.25 p.m.  
The Admiralty announces that twenty-five officers perished in the sinking of the Natal, including Captain, Rear-Admiral, and Lieutenant-Commander Murray and Lieutenant-Commander Murray.

## PRISONERS OF WAR CAMP.

Germans to be removed from Hunghom.

We understand that word has been received in the Colony to-day to the effect that the German prisoners of war are to be removed from Hunghom Camp.

## THOUGHTS ON CENSORS.

Mr. Birrell and the Banning of Poetry.

Mr. Birrell, M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland, speaking at Bristol at the 14th anniversary dinner at the Anchor Society, said however cheerful and courageous a front Ministers presented to fortune they were all well aware they were living in times of great moral and mental discipline. The Ministry existed for one purpose only, and that was the winning of this war, which presented problems that would tax the knowledge as well as the courage and patience of the people. These problems changed week by week, and almost day by day. As regards criticism, he remembered the criticism of the Crimean war, and that Dr. (afterwards Cardinal) Newman said all the blame was due to the British Constitution. The British Constitution might not perhaps be the best constitution for the preparation for war, but it might, after all, be the best guarantee for ultimate victory—better far than highly organised, debauched, brutalised instruments of military tyranny. (Cheers.)

Alluding to the censorship of the Press, Mr. Birrell said a great deal of nonsense had been talked. Blunders had been made, and were made every day. He would forbid the use, during the war, of poetry for literary gain of that kind could stand over. Soldiers were the censors and we had to trust to the soldiers in the field and at home to judge between things that were safe and things that were not safe. Speaking as a civilian he had found that there were things which he thought perfectly safe which were not perfectly safe. The naval and military authorities had strong objections to prompt and vigorous accounts being written for the Press. He thought himself that we sometimes took too limited a view of the necessities of a war like this for people were most anxious to learn about their relations. But the authorities had a stupendous burden upon them. They should not treat the matter as if the Home Secretary or the Lord Chancellor or the unfortunate soldier were to blame or as something for which the Government were to blame. In fact, nobody ought to be blamed until they were shown to be blameworthy. They could get better men to take the job. He hoped, however, that the authorities would know as early as possible whether good or bad.

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